

WOOSTER A. ENSIGN & SON HARDWARE STORE
75 Orange Street
New Haven
New Haven County
Connecticut

HABS No. CT-422

HABS
CONN,
5-NEWHA,
47-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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Location: 75 Orange Street, New Haven,
New Haven County, Connecticut.

USGS New Haven, Connecticut Quadrangle
Universe Transverse Mercator Coordinates
18.673710.4574430

Significance: The Wooster A. Ensign & Son Hardware Store building is one of the finest Italianate Style commercial buildings in New Haven and is part of a rare surviving group of nineteenth century commercial structures at the southern end of Orange Street.

Description: The original three-story building at 75 Orange Street is dominated by an elaborate cornice with large consoles and an enriched fascia above arched windows on the third floor. The facade is three bays wide with each bay possessing a single window. The second floor windows have stone lintels and sills. The third floor windows have stone sills and arched brick window heads.

A c. 1880 one-story addition runs the width of the parcel and is attached to the rear of the main building and the west elevation of what was a former livery building located on the rear property line. Prior to 1900, this addition had an entrance which led to Orange Street on the north side of the main building. The addition has a shallow gable roof with the ridge parallel to Orange Street. The interior is an open expanse of space with a waist high divider probably added in 1938 when the interior was subdivided for a second tenant.

A second one-story addition was attached to the north side of the main building in c.1900, filling in the old passageway which formerly ran from the rear addition to the street. This addition has a shallow shed roof with the higher ridge facing Orange Street. The interior space merges with the interior space of the main building. With the addition, the storefront became symmetrical. Two plate glass display windows flank a central entrance (located in the main building). The whole

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is capped by a wide sign band, running below the roof line of the addition and between the 1st and 2nd floors of the main building.

According to city building permits, the storefront was altered in 1921 and 1944 and the signband was altered in 1964 and 1972.

History:

According to city land records, Wooster A. Ensign bought a brick dwelling house at "53" Orange Street in 1873. According to an 1882 edition of Commerce, Manufacturers & Resources of New Haven, Ensign erected ". . . the premises owned and occupied by the house at present . . . for the business." (p.36) Research could not determine whether the former livery building at the rear of the site was built for Ensign or for the earlier dwelling.

In 1876, Ensign received a \$20,000 loan from the New Haven Savings Bank (deed, v.312, p.96) and he built the present building in that year. In 1877, he relocated Wooster A. Ensign & Son Company hardware store here. By 1880, Ensign constructed the one-story east (rear) addition mentioned in the description for the iron and steel aspect of their business. (By 1883, the firm is listed in the city directory as "Iron and Steel Merchants.") The Ensigns remained in the building until it was sold in 1899 to the Winchester family estate.

The next tenant at 75 Orange Street was the New Haven Window Shade Company in 1900. Based on the 1901 Sanborne map and the address change to 75-81 Orange Street in the 1901 city directory, it is believed that the New Haven Window Shade Company built the one-story northside addition within the first year of occupancy to increase retail display space. Andrew G. Smith, owner of The New Haven Window Shade Company, purchased the building in 1923. In 1938, Smith leased a portion of the space to the H. P. Hallock Co.

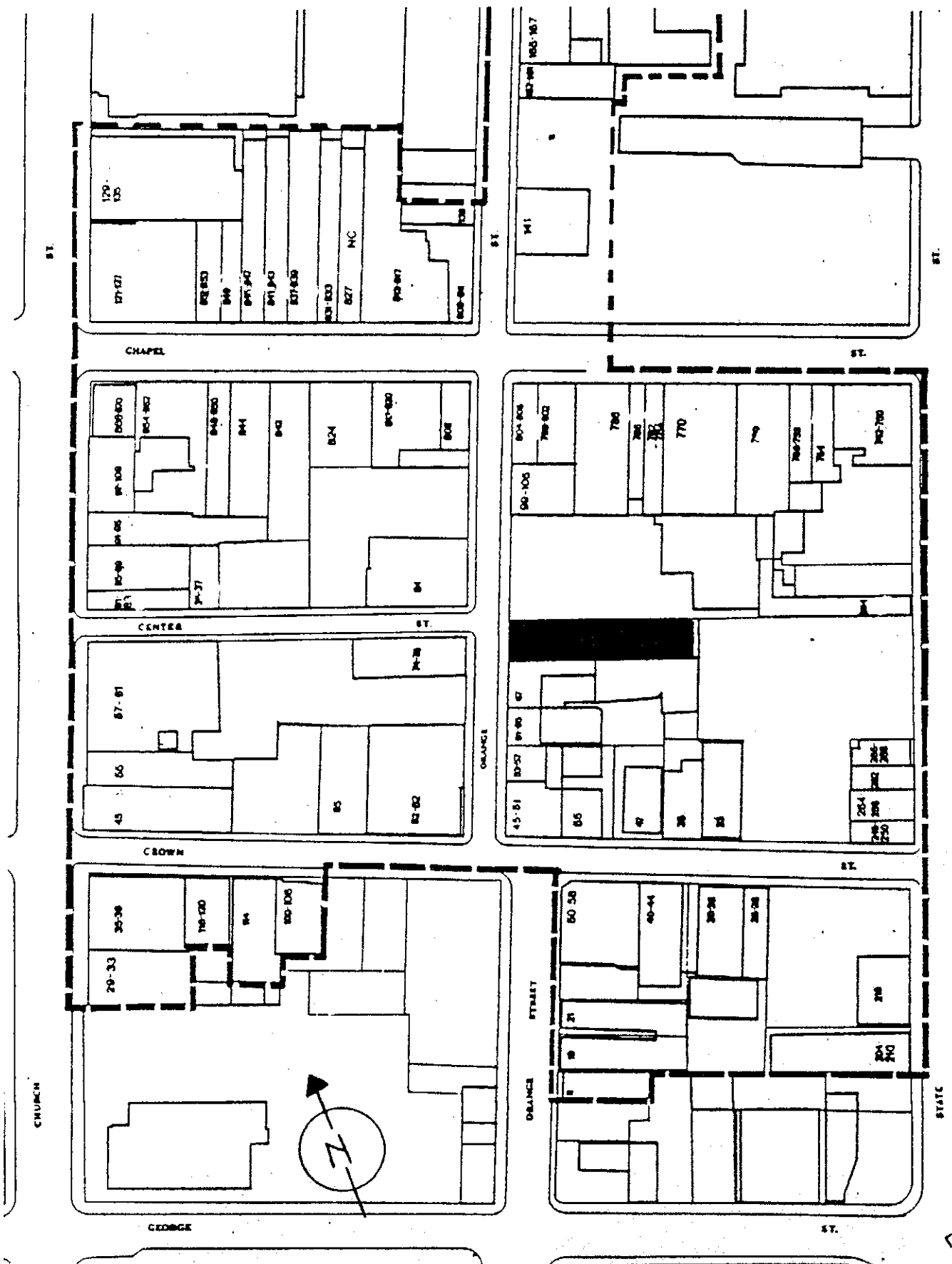
In 1944, 75-81 Orange Street was purchased by Claire B. Gordon (wife of Myron L. Gordon of the George Gordon Fruit & Produce Company). After The New Haven Window Shade Company vacated the premises, the entire commercial space was leased to Hallock's, who still occupy the building in 1990.

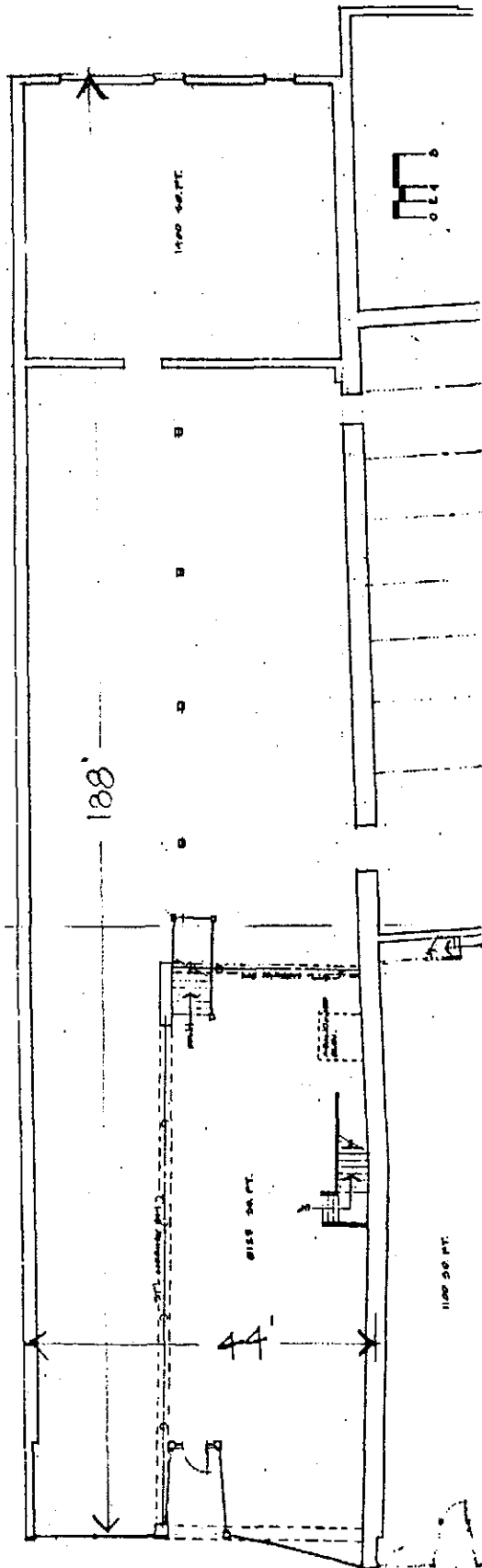
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Source: 9th Square National Register Historic District
Nomination, 1984
1868, 1880, 1888, 1901-23, 1911 maps
New Haven Building Department permits
New Haven City Directories
New Haven Colony Historical Society:
1920 photo: "Orange Street #32"
DANA collection (v.17,p.61; v.38,p.24,26)
New Haven Historic Resources Inventory (#653)
New Haven Land Records deeds
William Fast, president & treasurer, Hallocks
1940-1989

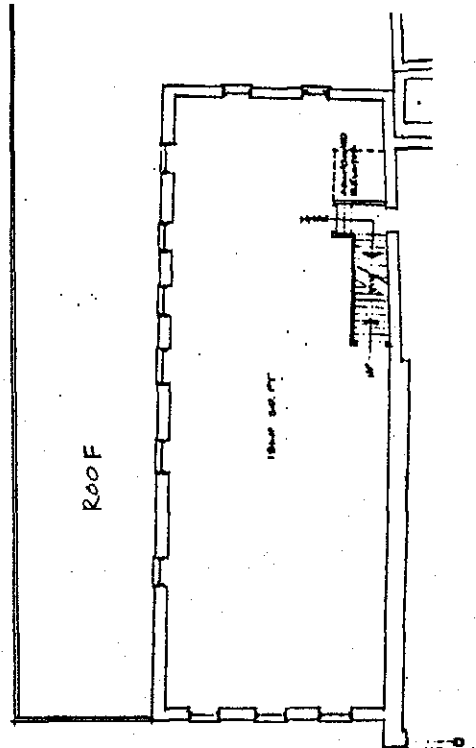
Historian: Kathleen A. Maher and Preston Maynard
New Haven Preservation Trust
May 29, 1990

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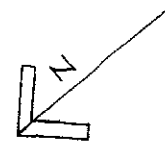




FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND & THIRD FLR. PLAN



75 ORANGE STREET NEW HAVEN CT.